

# MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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## A Brief History of the Amish

JOHN ANDREW HOSTETLER

### WHO ARE THE AMISH?

This question has been asked again and again by an inquisitive and questioning world. Because the Amish have been more concerned about practical Christian living than writing about themselves, much of their history has actually been written by "outsiders" who played up the unusual and peculiar practices of the Amish. As a result, much of the literature that one reads today about the Amish is altogether unreliable, even contrary to fact. The public has in a great many cases received a distorted impression of who the Amish are and what they stand for. In this discussion an attempt is made to present a brief and authentic glimpse of the life and history of a people who seem to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and who have maintained a culture in America almost identical to that of their European forefathers of two hundred and fifty years ago. The problems of writing a brief history of the Amish are chiefly two: (1) the selection of reliable source material, and (2) avoiding the dangers inherent in condensing a great amount of material.

The Amish, like the Mennonites, arose out of the Anabaptist<sup>1</sup> movement of the Reformation times. Since the movement seems to have sprung up in Switzerland and Holland almost simultaneously with the work of Luther and Zwingli, it is hardly correct to say that Anabaptism is a product of the Reformation. There can be no doubt, however, that the work of the Reformers prepared the way for the rise of Anabaptism. The origin of the Anabaptist movement cannot be traced to any one individual as its founder. Conrad Grebel (1498-1526), a well-educated enthusiastic co-worker with Ulrich Zwingli, experienced a marvelous conversion in 1522. He organized a circle of like-minded people for private Bible study and became a recognized leader in Switzerland. Under penalty of death he organized on about January 21, 1525, the first congregation among the Swiss Brethren (Mennonites). Menno Simons (1496-1561), a penitent Dutch Roman priest who began to read the Bible, caught the spirit of Anabaptism and in 1536 forsook his priestly office and became an outstanding spokesman for the Anabaptists in Holland and northern Germany. Because Menno was a powerful influence for the new movement, people



Eli S. Miller, 1821-1917

Familiarly known as "Sim Eli," that is, the Eli Miller whose father was Simon Miller, Eli was born in Holmes County, Ohio, on September 11, 1821. In 1843 he married Mary (German, Maria) Kauffman who bore him fifteen children: Levi, 1843; Jonas, 1845; Abraham, 1847;

began to name this new group after its leader, first using the name "Menist," and later Mennonite. This is the origin of the name, Mennonite Church. Other outstanding leaders among the Swiss Brethren were: Felix Manz (1480-1527), who was drowned for his faith in 1527; Michael Sattler (1495-1527), who was executed in 1527; and George Blaurock (1480-1529), who was burned in 1529. Pilgram Marpeck (1495-1556) was one of the few who lived a normal life span and died a natural death.<sup>2</sup>

The central idea of the Anabaptists was to revive the New Testament church which, since the time of Constantine (fourth century A.D.), had lost its purity of faith and life. The Brethren agreed with Luther that every person has the right of free access to God by faith. But they objected to a state church, and in this they were bitterly opposed by the Catholic Church as well as by the Reformers, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. A serious charge brought against Luther is that he agreed to the principle of permitting the

Catharina, 1848; Susan, 1850; Elizabeth, 1851; Simon, 1853; Lydia, 1854; Sarah, 1856; Eli, 1857; Amanda, 1859; Mahala, 1861; Maria, 1864; Malinda, 1866; and Harvey, 1870. (The youngest son is still living and is a member of the North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.) According to the Gnaegi family history, Eli Miller was ordained as an Amish deacon in Ohio in the year 1849. He was then a young married man with four children. In 1860 he was "confirmed," that is, ordained as a full-deacon or bishop or bishop-deacon, an Amish church office called in German *voelliger Armendiener*. Those who held this office did not necessarily preach regularly—resembling in that respect any other deacon—but they were authorized to do all the work of a bishop if the need arose. In the year 1870 Bishop Eli Miller located in the Amish settlement in Elkhart County, Indiana, his home being near the famous "Eight-Square School" east of Goshen a few miles and north of Route four. He followed the Amish Mennonite contingent rather than the Old Order Amish and was affiliated with the Forks and with the Clinton Frame congregations during his long life span. He lived to see the Amish Mennonites and the Mennonites of Indiana merge (1916). After he was ninety years of age he committed the Sermon on the Mount to memory. After a long and useful life he died on March 1, 1917. His body lies buried in the Miller Cemetery east of the Shore Mennonite Church.—W.

ruler of a given territory to determine the religion of the people in that territory. The ideal of the Brethren was to establish a voluntary church which would be composed of men and women who choose to follow Christ of their own free will. They believed that a true child of God will fashion his life after the plain teachings of Christ. By this they meant: (1) that a Christian will love all men; (2) that he must abstain from partaking of the evil and wickedness of the world; and (3) that he must preach the Gospel to an unbelieving world. In order to put these beliefs into practice they held that a true Christian will refrain from carnal strife and warfare, from the swearing of oaths, and from holding political offices. This program was so radically different from that of the state churches that it was brought to the test of tremendous opposition. Anabaptism spread like fire; persecution and martyrdom followed. "The authorities had great difficulty in executing their program of suppression, for they soon discovered that the Ana-

baptists feared neither torture nor death, and gladly sealed their faith with their blood."<sup>3</sup>

Concerning the life and character of the Anabaptists a Roman Catholic theologian, an opponent of the Swiss Brethren, wrote the following in 1582: "Among the existing heretical sects there is none which in appearance leads a more modest or pious life than the Anabaptists. As concerns their outward public life they are irreproachable. No lying, deception, swearing, strife, harsh language, no intemperate eating and drinking, no outward personal display, is found among them, but humility, patience, uprightness, neatness, honesty, temperance, straightforwardness in such measure that one would suppose that they had the Holy Spirit of God."<sup>4</sup> In spite of the desperate effort of the authorities to stamp out the Anabaptist movement by executing thousands of its adherents, the movement became even more vigorous and continued to grow in numbers for about one hundred years.

The first division among the Swiss Brethren was the Amish schism, which broke out in 1693 in the midst of bitter persecution. Judging from the effects of the division one would suppose that the cause was on fundamental points of doctrine, but this was not the case.<sup>5</sup> Convinced that a stricter policy of discipline must be enforced, a young bishop by the name of Jacob Ammann led the party which stood for the strict practice of avoidance.<sup>6</sup> This practice of shunning was earlier taught by the Dutch leaders, Menno Simons and Dirk Philips, but it was not generally preached among the Swiss Brethren. Another controversy was whether or not the "true-hearted people" were saved.<sup>7</sup> Ammann demanded a more rigid observance of the older customs current in that day and seems to have looked with suspicion on all new innovations in the church. The common notion that forms of clothing, on such minor points as "hooks and eyes" and the "beard," were the cause of the Amish division is entirely false. At the time of the division the Anabaptists followed common practices on forms of clothing and worship. The difference today is due to the fact that the Amish have for the past two and one-half centuries adhered more strictly to the older customs; they have remained static on these points, while the Mennonites have "progressed" away from them. While Jacob Ammann was going from place to place demanding that ministers take a stand on avoidance, he met Hans Reist, an older bishop, who contradicted him on the matter of strict avoidance. The occasion for the outbreak of the division was when Reist and his party failed to appear at an appointed ministers' meeting, whereupon Ammann immediately pronounced them under the ban. Reist in turn expelled Ammann and his party by placing them under the ban. The division, which brought absolute separation in 1697, caused much anxiety resulting in a flow of letters of inquiry and information.<sup>8</sup> Several attempts were

made at reconciliation, but in vain. The Ammann party in 1698 confessed that they had acted too rashly in the use of the ban and that they desired to be received again as brethren.<sup>9</sup> But the ill feelings caused by the controversy had already involved too many people and the prejudices were too deeply rooted in their minds to bring about a peaceful settlement.

The Amish have since 1697 spread themselves over much territory. In Europe settlements were made in Zweibrücken, near the Palatinate, Montbéliard, France, Luxembourg, and Bavaria. These Amish settlements still exist, but they have not retained their distinctiveness as have the Amish in America. Other settlements in Europe that have completely died out are those in Wittgenstein, Waldeck, Hesse-Cassel, and Galicia. A group went to Volhynia, Russia, in 1815 but have since migrated to America.<sup>10</sup>

The spirit of unrest and war which repeatedly stripped the small countries of central Europe of life and property gave rise to the movement for America. The Mennonites and Amish as well as other religious minorities whose consciences were sensitive took advantage of William Penn's generous offer in the early eighteenth century. The Amish migration to America began about 1710, and large numbers arrived between 1727 and 1754. They came to Pennsylvania and settled probably first in Berks County, where Bishop Jacob Hertzler and Jacob Hochstetler located near the gap in the Blue Mountains. After the Amish began to arrive in greater numbers, they settled in Chester, Lebanon, and Lancaster counties. Some early Amish family names were: Yoder, Zook, Lapp, Fisher, Kauffman, Hostetler, Beiler, King, Hartzler, Mast, Plank, Stoltzfus, Stutzman, and others. As frontiersmen they lived simple lives and had to meet the usual hardships of pioneering. On several occasions they were subjected to Indian raids, and during the French and Indian and Revolutionary wars their faith and nonresistance was put to a test. From eastern Pennsylvania many emigrated westward, arriving in Somerset County already in 1767 and in Mifflin County in 1790. A congregation was organized in Buffalo Valley (Union County) in 1836. After 1800 few new communities were established in Pennsylvania.

The first Amish settlers in Ohio came from Somerset County (Pennsylvania) and located in Holmes County in 1808. Today that Amish community is one of the most thickly settled in America. Wayne County was settled next when Jacob Yoder from Mifflin County led the way in 1817. Here the Amish prospered, and in a few years became more progressive than did their brethren in the East. Logan County was the recipient of Yoders, Troyers, Kings, Bylers, and Kauffmans from Mifflin County between 1840 and 1850. The group was enlarged by several families from Holmes County.<sup>11</sup> In a few years the community

extended into Champaign County where the first Amish service was held in 1850. The Amish in Butler and Fulton counties came not from Pennsylvania but were members of an entirely new stream of immigration. From 1820 to 1850 large numbers came to America directly from Alsace, Lorraine, Bavaria, and Hesse-Darmstadt. In addition to settling in the two counties in Ohio, they established themselves in Lewis County, New York; Wilmet Township, Ontario; Lee and Henry counties, Iowa; and in Woodford, Tazewell, and Bureau counties, Illinois. That this new wave of Amish immigration was an entirely different extraction from that of the Pennsylvania Germans can be surmised from their names: Naffziger, Gascho, Schertz, Stucki, Gerber, Roth, Litwiller, Kennel, and others. The great opportunities in the West and the frequent disagreements in the larger Amish communities were two motives which led to the westward movement. In 1831 a group of Amish from Alsace and Lorraine arrived in Woodford, Tazewell, and Bureau counties, Illinois. This was the largest settlement of Amish made during the 1820-1850 wave of immigration. Congregations were later organized in Putnam, Bureau, McLean, Douglas, and Moultrie counties. First settlements in Indiana began in 1841 when the Millers and Bontragers from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, located in Elkhart County. The Amish in Indiana later spread into Allen, Brown, Daviess, Howard, Jasper, Miami, and Newton counties. Settlements farther west included Lee County, Iowa, in 1840; Hickory and Cass counties, Missouri, about 1855; Seward County, Nebraska, in 1873; and Reno County, Kansas, in the early eighties. A group of Lancaster County Amish moved to Waterloo County, Ontario, in 1824, and to Lewis County, New York, soon after 1830.<sup>12</sup> The Amish trek to Oregon began in 1876 when Gideon Lantz from Douglas County, Illinois, arrived in Hubbard. In 1894 four Amish families of Elkhart County, Indiana, arrived in North Dakota; others followed from Indiana, Ohio, Kansas, and Pennsylvania.

Looking back for two hundred years, the history of the Amish in America is inspiring, and yet it is disheartening. Inspiring because of their sincere attempts to perpetuate the high ideals of their Swiss forefathers, and lamentable because of the numerous divisions which have occurred among them. In doctrine the Amish and Mennonites agree, but in practice there is wide divergence. Both adopted the Dordrecht confession of 1632 and still claim that as the best expression of their faith. Up to 1850 the Amish in America were one body and, living in isolated communities, they had almost no spiritual fellowship with the Mennonites. After 1850, however, things began to change. The absolutist position of making no changes at all gave way when certain Amish congregations began to build meetinghouses and when a few of the more progressives broke with the time-honored customs. In an effort to

create a better understanding and to keep unity among the congregations, a series of ministers' meetings ("Diener Versammlungen") were held annually from 1862 to 1878. These meetings were held in various states as far west as Iowa with attendance ranging all the way from twenty-seven to eighty-nine ministers. The question of "creek baptism," which was for ten years or more the source of agitation in Mifflin County, was thoroughly discussed, but finally dropped without any definite agreement. Other subjects considered were: the meidung, adultery, the attitude toward war, the duties of a deacon, and numerous items related to church discipline. The method of procedure was usually conducted as follows: (1) raising of practical questions; (2) the appointment of a "council" (a committee of from five to seven members) to deliberate on each question; (3) a recommendation to conference; (4) open discussion by the general assembly; and (5) a vote by the entire conference.<sup>13</sup> Slight variations soon began to appear among the widely scattered congregations of the Amish, and it became clear that the annual Diener Versammlungen could not bring about unity. The final outcome of these conferences was the crystallization of the entire American Amish into three rather well-defined bodies. There were those who favored a more liberal policy of church discipline, including the followings of Joseph Stuekey of Illinois (Central Conference Mennonites), Benjamin Eichler of Iowa, and a few congregations in Ohio. These groups have now merged with the General Conference of Mennonites of North America. Representing the other extreme were those congregations who were decidedly conservative, together with those who had objected to the conference idea from the start. These are today known as the "Old Order Amish" and maintain the same old customs of the fathers. The third faction consists of those who took a middle position and favored a fairly moderate course, later called "Amish Mennonites." After organizing themselves into three conferences (Western, Indiana-Michigan, and Eastern), they merged with the main body of Mennonites in America. It is estimated that about two thirds of the Amish in America have merged with the Mennonite body. Several scattered congregations who favored meetinghouses, Sunday schools, and mission work organized the Conservative Amish Mennonite Conference in 1905. Their membership is about three thousand, and in some respects they work with Mennonite General Conference.

(To be continued)

<sup>1</sup> The word "Anabaptist" means "re-baptizer" and was practiced on the ground that infant baptism was unscriptural. In Switzerland, this group was called "Swiss Brethren," in Austria, "Hutterites," in Holland and North Germany, "Menists." All of these peaceful groups objected seriously to the name "Anabaptist," which was a term used to designate a punishable heresy.

<sup>2</sup> John C. Wenger, *Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine* (Scottsdale, 1947), 29.

<sup>3</sup> Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, April, 1944.

Bender says further, "... if the pagan persecution of the early church was severe, the persecution of the Anabaptist-Mennonites by the Catholic and Protestant state churches of Reformation times was, in proportion to numbers, still more severe. In the first ten years over five thousand of the Swiss Brethren were executed in Switzerland and surrounding territories. . . . Within the first five years, most of the early leaders died at the stake, under the headsman's axe, or by drowning. Persecution set in immediately upon the organization of the church in 1525, and although the last martyr in Switzerland was executed in 1614, full toleration for Swiss Mennonites did not come until 1815, while Bernese Mennonites were being sold as galley slaves as late as 1750. In Holland toleration came somewhat earlier, though not formally and fully until 1798, and the last execution took place in 1574."

[Quoted from *Mennonite Origins in Europe*, Series I (Akron, Pa.), 1942, 42.]

<sup>4</sup> Karl Rembert, *Die Wiedertäufer im Herzogtum Jülich* (Berlin, 1899), 546; as quoted in Harold S. Bender's "The Anabaptist Vision."

<sup>5</sup> An excellent discussion of the Amish division and probably the most thorough is that written by Milton Gascho in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, October, 1937.

<sup>6</sup> This practice, sometimes called "meidung," "shunning," or "the ban," is based on I Cor. 5:11; II Thess. 3:14; Titus 3:10; Num. 15:30, 31, that church members should not eat or drink with excommunicated members who are living in known sin. This is not only a punishment for the offender but, when practiced in the best sense, is to serve as a redemptive method in winning back the excommunicated one. All true Anabaptists held that the church must be pure, but was this to be taken literally—to withdraw in domestic, social, and business relationships, or was it a spiritual avoidance—avoidance at the Lord's table? Between these two extremes there have been varying degrees of interpretation which have caused many schisms in the Amish church.

<sup>7</sup> The "true-hearted people," sometimes called *Halbtäufer* (Halfway-Anabaptists), were those persons who during the times of severe persecution had given every possible aid to the Mennonites by giving them food and lodging, and warning them of approaching danger from their pursuers, contrary to the orders of the authorities. These people approved of the teaching of the Brethren but on account of the persecution failed to make a public confession of their faith by being baptized. See John Horsch, *Mennonites in Europe* (Scottsdale, 1942), 262.

<sup>8</sup> Many of these letters have been found and appear in the Gascho article, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, October, 1937.

<sup>9</sup> John Horsch, *op. cit.*, 264.

<sup>10</sup> Harold S. Bender, *Mennonite Origins in Europe* (Akron, Pa., 1942), 53.

<sup>11</sup> Madison County was the recipient of Amish in 1896 when the following families moved there from Holmes County: David and Benjamin Troyer, Daniel and E. J. Miller, David Farmwald, Benjamin

Frey, Moses Kaufman, and Moses Schla-bach.

<sup>12</sup> The information in this paragraph is drawn largely from C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonites of America* (Scottsdale, 1909), pp. 208-240.

<sup>13</sup> John Umble, "The Amish Mennonites of Union County, Pennsylvania," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, July, 1933, 174.

## A Communication

December 19, 1947

. . . In recent months I have rescanned the various available histories of the Mennonites and it strikes me that much of that part of the story of the migration rests primarily on original research done in Switzerland by Ernst Mueller and in Holland by Schaeffer. Always references to either the Swiss or Dutch archives are indirect; that is, they are quoted from Mueller or some other source.

The reason I mention this is the belief that neither Mueller nor any other researcher has exhausted the source material. In writing any book it is a case of selection and while Mueller did a remarkably good job he had so little in the way of accurate reports on the migration to America that it would have been impossible for him to completely dovetail what he found abroad with what is available over here, little as it is.

Much has been written about Germantown and that subject is fairly well covered. But recent research fairly definitely shows that the Mennonite element in Germantown was in a minority and that the big, important Mennonite settlement was in Lancaster County. You yourself have done a great job on Montgomery County or more accurately Franconia but that locality was never as solidly Mennonite as were large sections of the Lancaster countryside. It is the best example of a Mennonite settlement in America and outside of family historians it has never been adequately tapped. . . .

Until a resurvey of not only the materials in Bern but also in Zurich, Alsace, Pfalz, and Holland is done no definitive history can be written.

For instance, most histories, based largely on family traditions, indicate or even take for granted that there were unnumbered Mennonite immigrants to Pennsylvania between 1710 and 1717 and again between 1717 and 1727, when, in my opinion, such was not the case at all.

The first Mennonites in America, those in Germantown, were Dutch as is well known. Some years later, there were in addition a few families from the Palatinate, who were Mennonites, but it is extremely doubtful if any of these were of Swiss origin. Of the three Palatinate families—I am leaving out Hans Graef and Wynant Bowman—in Germantown up to 1710, they were all names listed as early as 1664 in the census lists prepared by Dr. H. S. Bender. There you find the family names of Kolb at Wolfsheim; Cassel at Kreisheim; and Clemens at Niederflorsheim.



It seems doubtful to me that any of these names are of Swiss origin but rather that they stem from Holland or some of the Dutch settlements on the lower Rhine. It is well known that after the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), Dutch did settle in the Pfalz. Unless it can be said with some certainty, that the census records of 1664 for the Pfalz are incomplete, there apparently were either none or very few Swiss Mennonites in that district in that year. Apparently there were NO Mennonites east of the Rhine above Mannheim and Heidelberg.

However, the Zurich Swiss Baptists had been forced into exile long before that date. Apparently they settled in Alsace, for it was there in 1660 that a group of ministers adopted the Dortrecht confession. Their names . . . Miller, Ringer, Schebly (Scheebli), Schneider, Egly, Schmidt, Habich, Huser (Houser), Gochenauer, Bumen (Bauman), and Frick are undoubtedly Zurich family names.

It was about this time that Louis XIV of France seized most of Alsace and progressively took over locality after locality. Obviously the Täufer were driven out, although the task was not even complete by 1712 (see Mueller's list of congregations for that year at Zweibrücken).

Driven out of the Alsace, some fled back to Switzerland, possibly halting on the way in the Jura, others crossed the Rhine into the Oberpfalz and in the 1685 census we begin to find many Zurich names. Still missing, however, are the names of the Bern exiles of 1671, with few exceptions.

Jumping ahead to 1710, we find a sudden exodus the previous year of thousands of so-called Palatines and naturally among them were some Mennonites. We know of at least fourteen families, eight of whom came to Pennsylvania in 1709 and the remainder the following years. Most of the first group joined the Germantown Mennonite congregation and the second group of 1710 were the majority of those who settled at Pequea, Lancaster County.

There have been rather complete lists of the Palatine emigrants to England published and no doubt the names of the 1709 immigrants to Pennsylvania are among them.

A few interesting facts are disclosed in those lists, some of which I shall recount: (1) We find the name Jacob Graeff with the notation, "his parents live in Pennsylvania." We already have a Hans Graeff in Germantown, presumably he arrived in 1707 and in his will, filed in Lancaster County, he names a son Jacob, his eldest, by a first marriage. This Jacob Graeff presumably married Barbara Brackbill, a daughter of Rev. Benedict Brackbill. (2) Anna Eschelman's son—a Bern Swiss name; Mark Oberholtzer, wife, three sons and two daughters—obviously the family which settled in Bucks County; (3) John Heer, wife and three children, and on a later list, the same five persons returned to

Holland, because they refused to take an oath of allegiance. As it happens, the Hans Herr, who settled in Lancaster County in 1710, had three children who were born in Pennsylvania.

All in all, however, the number of Palatine Mennonites coming to Pennsylvania up to 1717 was very small. The Dutch were much opposed to any migration to America; there must have been some feeling against the Quakers and their attempts to proselyte among the Dutch Mennonites. Then William Penn himself was mixed up in the business of trying to carry the Swiss Mennonites in 1710 to America against their will (see Mueller). Ritter and company had purchased land from him and he apparently interceded for them with Lord Townsend, the English ambassador to Holland.

When the following year, a place was being sought for the Bern exiles, the Dutch looked everywhere except to America. There is not even a hint of that in any of the arrangements.

Which brings us down to 1717, the year when three ships with more than 300 persons aboard arrived in Philadelphia, yet we know very little indeed about that. Surely there must be something somewhere about this outstanding event other than the crumbs that have come our way so far.

Sincerely,  
MARTIN H. BRACKBILL.

## History of the Olive Mennonite Church

LOIS SMELTZER

For several years preceding 1862, church services were held in a log schoolhouse six miles southwest of Elkhart, Indiana, or one mile north of the present site. I do not know whether or not there were services in this schoolhouse when the Olive cemetery was plotted in 1855. For some time meetings were held only every four weeks. Daniel Moyer (1812-1864) was the first resident minister. He served the circuit of the Yellow Creek, Holdeman, and Olive churches; later he was located permanently at Olive.

In 1862 a frame building, 36 x 60, was erected on the site of the present brick building. It was built on the Shaum farm and for some years was called the Shaum Church. There seems to have been no resident minister during the period following the death of Daniel Moyer in 1864. Visiting ministers were Sam Yoder, James Culbertson, John S. Coffman, Jacob Wisler, Daniel Brenneman, and John F. Funk. In 1871 Henry Shaum (1826-1892) was ordained to serve the church at Olive as the first resident minister after the death of Daniel Moyer.

The first Sunday school was held in the fall of 1866. The four classes met afternoons. The classes were conducted in the English language and were soon stopped by Bishop Jacob Wisler. They were allowed to be conducted in the

German language; so they again convened, conducted this time by H. B. Brenneman, commonly called "Brother Henry." (I think he was a deacon at the Prairie Street Church in Elkhart but never at Olive.) This school met for three or four summers before church services.

In 1871 Bishop Jacob Wisler (1808-1889) broke with the church over the use of the English language and English songbooks. He started his group on more conservative lines; they are known today as the Wisler Mennonites. In 1874 Preacher Daniel Brenneman (1834-1919) walked out the other door. He joined John Krupp and Solomon Eby in forming the M.B.C. Church which had its beginnings in Canada. After these two groups split from the church in the district—it seems that at the time all official meetings of the Yellow Creek, Olive, and Holdeman district were held in the Yellow Creek Church—there was some argument over the meetinghouse at Olive. The law said those who remained by the Conference were to have the building and since Wisler left the Conference, the (Old) Mennonite Church had the building. At any rate the building was torn down and in 1888 the present brick structure was erected on the same site as the frame building had been. A strip one rod wide was donated when the new yard was laid out. Extensive alterations were made in the building and it was enlarged, 1948.

Henry Shaum was ordained a bishop in 1886. In 1896 Jacob Shank (1856-1905) was ordained. He served the church at Olive till his death in 1905. In 1905 William Hartman (1875-1929) was ordained; but he felt his inability so much that he never served. D. A. Yoder (1883- ) was ordained at Holdeman on July 14, 1907. In January, 1908, he was called to help in the work at Olive. In 1910 he was ordained a bishop. He was given much responsibility in the church, and it was felt that he needed a helper. So on May 5, 1917, Clarence Shank (1885- ) was ordained to assist in the work at Olive. Yoder and Shank still serve the congregation.

Bishops who served the church at Olive, either resident or visiting, were Jacob Wisler, Henry Shaum, John F. Funk, David Burkholder, Jacob K. Bixler, and David A. Yoder. Deacons have been Jacob Long (1836-1903), Henry Christophel (1828-1880), Daniel Coffman, Jonas Brubaker (1850-1932), Irvin Long (1868-1937), Andrew J. Miller (1895- ), and Merrill C. Weaver (1900- ). The last two named are our present deacons.

I do not have many figures on membership growth, but I know that in 1911 there were 70 members, in 1928 there were 195, and at present (1945) there are 200.

NOTE: I got much of my material from D. A. Yoder; and some dates, etc., from books in the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College.

412 E. Lincoln Avenue,  
Goshen, Indiana.

